

POSTER CHILD FROM HELL

They always seem to show up in the middle of The Rush on a bad Saturday night, hair brushed back so precise not even a hurricane could disturb the coif. Their designer silk shirts are always freshly pressed, the moustache trimmed, nails pared and buffed to perfection. He orders four drinks and wonders why they aren't in front of him as the last syllable leaves his mouth, hands over an American Express card when he recognizes his order on the wood.

"What's that?" I say.

"It's a credit card."

"I know that. I was ringing up sales in a National Hotel chain for State Senators when you were in first grade."

"So what's the problem?"

"Your credit's no good here."

He looked as if he had been gut shot and someone had poured kerosene in the open wound and was about to light a match; the concept of bad credit was that appalling.

"Mr. Cash only." I said.

"What?"

"You know, money, the stuff your old man uses to pay for your plastic problems."

He looked as if he had heard of money but wasn't sure where it was kept.

I was going to remind him that it was in the bill-fold part of his wallet but reconsidered; even he was probably aware of the general location of the precious Mr. Cash.

"I'll bet you don't make a lot of tips."

"Tipping, isn't that a city in China?"

He didn't get it and he didn't leave me the time of day either. Not that I wanted it from him. Actually, we were working on a hundred and a quarter apiece for the night so why not have a little fun for a change?

CONTACTS

"There I was on line at the Paper Cutter getting the pages for the magazine copy ready and this strange guy comes up to me and hands me his card.

He was old, ancient in fact, decrepit even. The card was blue and it had all kinds of names on it, some with addresses on other planets. I wondered who took

the order for that one and where.
He indicated that he was on some kind
of mission that was of vital importance
and top secret to boot.
'Take Sara, for instance. We've been
in contact for years. Her home base is still
Saturn but that could change on a moment's
notice. What are you having run off?'
'Runes. I'm the head of a Secret Society
that specializes in the significance of signs;
have you ever heard of The Semilogists?'
I thought I had a strong shot at becoming
a statistic judging from the look in his eyes.
It was only later, that I realized he hadn't
gotten the joke and he had perceived me as
a threat from a rival power."

SUB SHOP KAMA SUTRA

"I was still working my
brother's string of sub shops
in Syracuse when I heard
this incredible story.
Elaine, one of his managers,
was trying to get through
to her store on the horn
but the phone was off
the hook. It was snowing
like crazy but she got
her car out intent on
driving a couple of miles
to the joint, liberating the
kids on the job. She got
there around 11 and is about
to walk in when she sees
the kids lying down by
the counter working each other
over in a major way.
Her first impulse is to break
them up but thinks instead:
Someone I know should see this.
So she calls my brother.
He's like raked out at the time
but it's only a little snow
and what's a couple of miles,
anyway? This is Syracuse after all.
He's there in about ten and
can't believe two kids in their
teens are trying out positions
he thought you could only see
in X-Rated movies. His impulse
is to break up the party,
they are on the clock after all,